

AUSTRALIAN BASEBALL
OFFICE FOR UMPIRE DEVELOPMENT
UMPIRE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



**DEVELOPED BY AUSTRALIAN BASEBALL OFFICE FOR UMPIRE
DEVELOPMENT WITH
ASSISTANCE OF STATE DIRECTORS OF UMPIRING**

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STRATEGY FOR BASEBALL UMPIRE DEVELOPMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Umpire Development Program of Australian Baseball is committed to supply training and support to umpires

Currently Australian Baseball has an accreditation and development program that, primarily, trains an individual in the rules of baseball and mechanics of baseball umpiring and the application of those rules and mechanics to competition.

Each State was at a different evolutionary stage in the development of umpires, but following the implementation of a National Accreditation and Development Program all States now have unified interpretations and teachings.

2. RATIONALE

Each State requires a sound and common foundation. This foundation then assists a more rounded development of umpires. Throughout Australia, it can also form a very useful introduction for school age umpires and new adult recruits.

3. PLAN

This strategy focuses on sound planning, organisation and delivery of programs to develop people in the roles of umpires in Baseball.

3.1 AIM

To improve umpire's performance by all people having access to quality development pathways in Baseball.

3.2 OBJECTIVE

To increase the numbers, skill and standing of Baseball umpires.

- * encourage people to undertake Baseball umpiring.
- * improve the knowledge, competency and performance of umpires.
- * provide structured pathways of development for umpires.
- * upgrade the community support for and understanding of umpire roles.
- * an equitable and comparable level of attention and resources to that given to players and coaches.

4. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to define individuals and organisations in the team sport of Baseball.

An umpire is that person who controls the actual conduct of the game during its play by application of the rules of the sport and who performs functions necessary to the conduct of the game.

SSO is the State Sporting Organisations that include the State Governing Body and State Umpire Organisation.

SDU is the State/Territory Director of Umpiring responsible for the implementation of the Umpire Development Policy in that State or Territory.

5. PRINCIPLES

The provision of quality sports opportunities involves the interaction of players, coaches, administrators, umpires, and, a mutual respect for each other based on the following principles:

- * Baseball umpires undertake a very important role in the functioning of sport.
- * The knowledge, competence and performance of umpires must be at a level commensurate with the standard of competition.
- * Sound theoretical understanding and continual practical experience, enhanced with accredited assessment, are the fundamentals of good performance.
- * An environment that supports the roles of the umpire contributes to improved performance.
- * The quality of inter-relationship between players, coaches, administrators and umpires directly affects the quality of sports participation.

6. VISION

To provide support of umpires that will promote Baseball as a National Leader.

7. PROCESS

Baseball umpires development is the responsibility of individual State Baseball Association organisations in conjunction with Australian Baseball governed by a plan developed under the Umpire Development Program.

- * State Sporting Organisations have a responsibility to develop and implement this strategy.
- * The Office for Umpire Development is the peak group responsible for unity of policy, quality standards and public advocacy.

8. MODEL

Australian Baseball, in association with the SSO is introducing a systematic approach to the training and development of existing and future umpires. The system will have three parts:

Baseball Orientation + Specific Baseball Practical Experience & Evaluation = Better Information
Better Education
Better Performance

Key elements for Baseball	Knowledge & skills specific to Baseball	"Doing it"
* role	* specific rules and interpretations	* developing experience and confidence
* rules	* specific mechanics	* evaluation by a mentor
* physiology	* specific performance and procedural standards	* development strategies
* psychology		
* mechanics		
* signalling		
* presentation		
* resolution		

Within Australian Baseball strategy the foundation level is called the Baseball orientation program.

Together with the existing Baseball Umpire Development Program this strategy:

- * encourages the positive role of umpires in the sport.
- * improves the pathways and satisfaction level of participants.
- * leads to improved performances of umpires.
- * will encourage more people to participate.
- * contributes to the overall development of Baseball.

The Baseball orientation program is flexible and incorporated into umpire development programs either as a stand-alone unit, as sub-units or within the Baseball specific components. Additionally it will be used as an information and awareness vehicle for Baseball at school, community and club level.

The process has direct reference to umpires in particular but is applicable, with varying emphasis, to all umpire roles.

The eight elements of the Baseball orientation program and their purposes are outlined below

- * **ROLE** - Role and environment of an umpire in Baseball.
The purpose is to develop an appreciation and understanding of various aspects of an umpire role as part of "the big team," that is, coaches, players, officials and administrators who, together, ensure that Baseball is successful and enjoyable.
- * **RULES** - Knowledge, comprehension and application of rules.
The purpose is to familiarise umpires with the reasons for rules, the means of defining and communicating rules and then developing a spirit in the application of rules that raises the conduct, enjoyment and spectacle of Baseball.
- * **PHYSIOLOGY** - Health and fitness of an umpire.
The purpose is to develop a sound fundamental understanding of the health and fitness requirements of an umpire consistent with player development.
- * **PSYCHOLOGY** - Interpersonal and communication skills.
The purpose is to gain an appreciation of the mental, verbal and non-verbal skills required to positively develop the role of an umpire.
- * **MECHANICS** - Positioning and mechanics.
The purpose is to familiarise umpires with the needs for, values of and correct mechanics to place an umpire in the best position to exercise a judgement or decision.
- * **SIGNALLING** - Mechanics.
The purpose is to encourage a consistent knowledge of the reasons for signals and correct signal techniques.
- * **PRESENTATION** - Presentation and performance.
The purpose is to improve the standards of planning, performance and presentation of umpires and thereby enhancing the professionalism and status of the umpires' position.
- * **RESOLUTION** - Grievance and conflict resolution.
The purpose is to encourage systematic, documented and publicly known procedures that address foreseeable occurrences and umpire functioning.

9. ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The provision, development and support of umpires, is the general responsibility of the Australian Baseball and State Associations.

The total community should influence a positive environment of support in which umpires can best undertake their role.

9.1 Australian Baseball and State Associations

* A framework as management for Umpire Development is shown in Appendix A.

* Australian Baseball and State Associations have an essential role in developing umpires and provision of pathways.

* Each State Association must have a person/s responsible for state-wide co-ordination of training and development of umpires. Such person must be suitably accredited and appointed in consultation with the Technical Officials and Competitions Manager. Networks of regional co-ordinators must also be established.

9.2 CLUB, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LEVELS

* Progressively, club, school and community groups can access development programs prepared by the Umpire Development Program and implemented by national and state networks thereby providing equitable opportunities throughout all levels of Baseball in Australia.

* Australian Baseball must place a high priority on supporting the development of umpires.

* One consultant, Technical Officials and Competitions Manager to have specific responsibility for umpiring development across Australia.

* All Consultants interact with State Associations to further integrate umpiring development into three-year development plans.

* The State Association to provide a local community link in the network of support for umpire development.

10. ACCREDITATION STRUCTURE.

See Appendices B and C

10.0 Level “O”. Orientation. State Level. Local Junior games, Emergency Duties.

Accreditation aimed at introducing juniors and their parents to umpiring at junior games. The presentation provides an overview of the task of umpiring, umpiring mechanics and signals, an introduction to the rules of the game and risk management.

- 0.1 A three - four hour seminar based on a Powerpoint presentation
- 0.2 Where facilities allow, an “on field” demonstration of umpire mechanics and application of the rules.
- 0.3 Umpires will receive an Accreditation Certificate and be eligible to wear the Official ABF “Green” Shirt.

10.1 Level 1. State Level. Local games.

Accreditation aimed at preparing umpires to officiate at State League Competition (under supervision of a higher accredited umpire), Association, Club, High School and Junior Level etc.

- 1.1 A ten hour seminar on Rules and Mechanics including video presentation.
- 1.2 A basic examination on Rules and Mechanics. This exam result will apply while the umpire remains at this level.
- 1.3 Umpires to maintain a log of umpiring over a twelve-month period.
- 1.4 Umpires will receive an Accreditation Certificate and be eligible to wear the Official ABF Umpire Shirt.

10.2 Level 2. State Level. State League Games, State Academy Tournaments, Under 14 National Championships.

Accreditation aimed at preparing umpires to officiate at Association, State League Games, State Academy Tournaments, Under 14 National Championships.

- 2.1 Must have current Level 1 Accreditation or be recognised under “Fast Track” Program.

- 2.2 Must have been active during previous twelve months at Level 1, and have umpired at least twenty games at Level 1 as evidenced in a Log Book.
- 2.3 A twenty hour seminar, (one weekend), which includes instruction and practical demonstration on rules and mechanics.
- 2.4 Assessment.
 - * Australian Baseball National Accreditation Theory Examination passed at required level. This exam result will apply while the umpire remains at this level.
 - * Satisfactory attendance and application at seminars and training classes.
 - * Onfield (game) assessment as determined by SDU. Australian Baseball Umpire Development Accredited Instructors should do these assessments.
- 2.5 Umpires will receive an Accreditation Certificate and be eligible to wear the Official Australian Baseball Umpire Shirt.

10.3 Level 3. National Level, National Tournaments.

Accreditation aimed at preparing umpires to officiate at Claxton Shield, National Academy Tournaments, Under 16 and 18 National Championships, Under Age Internationals.

- 3.1 Must have current Level 2 Accreditation
- 3.2 Must have been active during previous 24 months, or umpired a minimum of 70 games at Level 1 or 2
- 3.3 Forty hours of instruction at Seminars or Schools. Can be cumulative.
- 3.4 Assessment.
 - * Australian Baseball National Accreditation Theory Examination passed at required level. This exam result will apply while the umpire remains at this level.
 - * Satisfactory attendance and application at seminars and training classes.
 - * Onfield (game) assessment over four separate games as determined by SDU. Australian Baseball Umpire Development Accredited Instructors should do these assessments.
- 3.5 Umpires will receive an Accreditation Certificate be eligible to wear the Official Australian Baseball Umpire Shirt.

10.4 Level 4. International Panel Standard.

Accreditation aimed at preparing umpires to officiate at International Standard Games and Tournaments.

- 4.1 Must have current Level 3 Accreditation.
- 4.2 Must have been active during previous 48 months, or umpired a minimum of 150 games at Level 1, 2 and 3, with 60% at Level 3.
- 4.3 Accredited Instructor under the Australian Baseball Umpire Development Program.
- 4.4 Assessment.
 - * Satisfactory attendance and application at seminar as an instructor.
 - * Onfield (game) assessment over four separate games as determined by SDU. These assessments should be done in conjunction with Technical Officials and Competitions Manager and SDU.
- 4.5 Umpires will receive an Accreditation Certificate and be eligible to wear the Official Australian Baseball Umpire Shirt.

10.5 Level 5. International Appointment.

Those umpires who have been appointed by the IBAF to officiate at IBAF International Tournaments.

10.6 Criteria Required to Retain Level 1 to Level 5 Accreditation

Note Accreditation Lapses after Two Years.

To retain accreditation umpires must attend and satisfactorily complete the required level Nationally Accredited State Seminar or National School every two years.

It is not a necessity for the examination to be resat if an umpire wishes to remain at the current level

The level of accreditation may be renewed annually upon the above criteria being met.

Level 5 Accreditation is retained providing the requirements of Level 4 are met.

10.7 Instructor's Accreditation Levels.

Following are the levels with the desired qualifications and duties accredited to perform. Instructors must demonstrate competency to instruct at the appropriate level.

Level One

Experienced umpire with minimum Level Three Accreditation. To be used as an instructor at Level One Seminars under the supervision of a Level Two Instructor. May instruct basic mechanics as approved by the Umpire Development Program applicable to the 'Two Umpire System'. May only offer interpretations on specific rulings under prepared lectures. May assess umpires at Levels One and Two.

Level Two

Experienced umpire with minimum Level Three Accreditation and preferably have attended a Professional Umpire School. To be used as an instructor and/or Supervisor at Level One and as an instructor at a Level Two Seminars under the supervision of the SDU. May instruct basic mechanics as approved by the Umpire Development Program applicable to the 'Two, Three and Four Umpire Systems'. May only offer interpretations on specific rulings under prepared lectures. May assess umpires at Levels One, Two and Three.

Level Three

Experienced umpire with minimum Level Four Accreditation and preferably have attended a Professional Umpire School. To be used as an instructor and/or Supervisor at all levels. May instruct mechanics as approved by the Umpire Development Program. May assess umpires at all Levels. This is the required level for a State Director of Umpiring under the Umpire Development Program.

11. Role Description - State Director of Umpiring

Requirements and Duties of a State Director of Umpiring, also applicable where appropriate to Regional Coordinators

- Liaise with the Technical Officials and Competitions Manager (ABF)
- Liaise with the State General Manager
- Be familiar with the guidelines of the document “A Framework for Developing Baseball Umpiring in Australia – 2007-2010”
- Attend State Baseball Associations executive meetings
- Attend State Baseball Associations general meetings
- Lecture, or delegate an accredited instructor to lecture, or arrange a guest speaker at State Umpire Associations general meetings
- Liaise with the State Baseball Association committee
- Represent State Baseball Association at ABF level - Directorate meetings
- Initial distribution of national accreditation exams
- Duplication, collation and distribution of exams
- Appointment of exam centre supervisors
- Supervision of exams
- Collection of exams and State arrangements
- Organise
 - Training seminars
 - Workshops program
 - Facilitate
 - Applications - acceptance
 - Bookings
 - Accommodation and facilities
 - Lectures
 - Field demonstrations
- Recommend to the Technical Officials and Competitions Manager umpires for consideration for appointment to National Championships
- Co-ordinate umpires at hosted championships
- Attend, or appoint an accredited assessor to attend, Regional Championships
- Accreditations
 - Review
 - Renew
 - Update and present
- Update and review Umpire Development Program
- Recruitment of umpires
- Assessment of umpires
- Assessment of Regional Umpire Associations
- Recommendation to Technical Officials and Competitions Manager of and supervision of Accredited Instructors, Assessors and Mentors.
- Train and assess UDP Instructors
- Be familiar with the latest rule interpretations and mechanics.
- Update of training techniques
- Overview of exam results and suggestions
- Receive and distribute ABF guidelines and memos

- Remain familiar with ABF matters
- Write and distribute appropriate reports
- Liaise with Technical Officials and Competitions Manager regarding overseas training opportunities and nominations.
- Umpire game assignments. This may be delegated to an appropriately suited and qualified person, preferably an accredited instructor or assessor.
- Overview of Ejection and Umpire Game reports
- Public relations officer
- Budgeting for umpire training and development, and liaison with SSO's for funding.
- Keep update of the guidelines of ABF Policies
 - Equal Opportunity Policy
 - Blood and infectious diseases policy
 - Anti Harassment Policy
 - Fair Go for Officials Policy
 - Risk Management Policy
 - Member Protection Policy
- Correspond and liaise with other State Directors of Umpiring.

12. Seminar Content

12.1 Level One Seminar Content

Field Work

- Signals
- Fair/Foul
- Angle/Distance
- Pitcher's Cover
- Ball batted down first base line - no runners on
- Pivots
 - Infield hits
 - Outfield hits
- Pop-ups
- Clearing the catcher
- Bouncing ball through the catcher
- Two pitching positions
- Award of bases
- Plays at the plate
- Double play
- Runner 1st to 3rd
- Plate umpire responsibilities - batted ball
- Fly ball responsibilities
- Plate stance - soft toss drill - pitching machine - cage work

Lectures

- Duty of Care
- Strike Zone
- Definitions
- Positions with runner/s on base
- Trouble balls
- Clearing the bat

Additional Material – Workshops

- Role Play
- Report writing
- Ten questions - know your instructors

Level Two Seminar Content

Field Work

- Balks
- Pick-offs
- Rundowns
- Double play - reverse double play
- Time play
- Runner on 3rd tagging
- Runner on 2nd
- Runner on 1st and 2nd
- Runner on 2/3, 2 out - anticipation
- Runner on 3rd - ball down R/F line
- Visits
- Pop-up/pivot
- Infield hits (A/D) - outfield hits (Pivot)
- Runner on 1st tagging - reverse role
- Runner overtaking
- Interference
 - batter on catcher
 - catcher on batter
 - at 2nd base
- Obstruction
 - play on runner
 - no play on runner
- Cage work - managers comments

Lectures

- Preparation - pregame - post game - four possible scenarios
- Grey areas
- Appeal plays
- Umpire reports - ejection
- Catch and carry
- Umpire/Manager relations
- Umpire/Catcher relations - working with the catcher
- A Play (4)
- Plate meeting / line ups / substitutions
- Handling situations
- Getting your own calls

Additional Material – Workshops

Role play

Level Three Seminar Content

Field Work

- Field drills - revision of Level 1 and 2 review and refine out and safe calls and strike calls.
- Three Umpire System
 - Third base umpire works inside diamond
 - Umpire goes out of diamond on trouble balls
- Handling situations - simulated games - body language
- Handling bean ball situations - simulated games
- Cage work - intensify manager comments

Lectures

- Writing an umpires report
- Handling rain situations
- Handling protested game situations
- Vision dynamics
- Calling the "Perfect Game.
- Control
- Goal setting
- Personal preparation
- Refining the Strike Zone
- The Bottom Line - Mental Toughness

Additional Material - Workshops

- Role Play

13. Junior Umpire Policy

Objective

To recruit, train, develop and nurture junior baseball umpires through to full adult umpire involvement in the sport.

Application

All baseball/teeball umpires under the age of 18 years.

Policy

Generally, junior umpires should be appointed with a “supervising” umpire who should be Australian Baseball accredited.

Junior umpires should only umpire games in which the players are aged below the age of the umpire. Exceptions to this policy are permitted where the supervising umpire is a Level 2 or higher accredited umpire and an Australian Baseball Umpire Instructor makes the appointment.

Australian Baseball Umpire Instructors only are permitted to provide critical appraisal of junior umpires.

Rationale

Umpiring sport carries a duty of care responsibility for all involved; players, coaches, managers, fellow umpires and spectators. Usually, umpires require game experience to identify potential risks within a game and junior umpires should have that experience available to them in the form of a supervising umpire. As the junior umpire gains experience, a maturity and wisdom is developed that may not require the initial level of supervision.

Additionally, clubs and associations should have codes of conduct signed by umpires, parents, players, coaches and managers. These documents help delineate the responsibilities of each group and may be used to protect junior umpires from unhelpful criticism.

At all stages, junior umpires should be encouraged to study the game, its rules, umpire mechanics and systems and associate with senior umpires within an umpire association.

14. Target Accreditation Levels

Level “O” is the minimum level of Umpire Accreditation required for all games from teeball to the highest level of senior baseball in Australia. However, because teeball and baseball players develop skills to compete at increasingly higher levels, those officiating must also keep pace with these skills.

There are many people convinced that the skill of the umpire does have a positive impact on the skills developed by players. Certainly the opposite is true, where poor umpiring leads to disenchantment with the sport and early retirement of players.

In an effort to encourage umpires to seek higher level accreditation, the following table attempts to signify the appropriate level for officials against the skill displayed by the players.

Level of the Game	Recommended Umpire Accreditation Level
Teeball to Under 10	Level “O” with an appreciation of baseball, Level 1 desirable
Machine or pitcher baseball to Under 12	Level “O” with an appreciation of baseball, Level 1 desirable
Under 12 Representative Games (Association and above)	Level 1
Under 14 – 16 Club (below elite level)	Level O, Level 1 desirable
Under 14 – 16 Club (elite level)	Level 1
Under 14 – 16 Representative games	Level 1 (Level 2 for Plates in Finals)
Senior Recreational Baseball	Level 1 (Level 2 for Plates in Finals)
Metropolitan and State Leagues	Level 1 (Levels Level 2/3 for Plates in Finals)
National Championships, Etc.	Level 3 (Level 2 for “A” (Under 14))

15. Umpire Incentives – Payment for Umpire Services

At all levels of baseball administration, administrators must be mindful of the need to recruit, train, develop and encourage individuals to become umpires and retain them.

Umpire incentives can be very cheap. Mature conduct during the game and a “thank you” at the end regardless of a win or loss for all umpires but especially junior umpires will pay good dividends.

Monetary payment to umpires is generally to cover costs including training costs, uniform, equipment and travel. Where these costs are minimal, payments MUST be in keeping with the Accreditation Level of the umpire, otherwise those umpires are not encouraged to complete higher levels of accreditation.

The following guidelines are provided to maintain consistency:-

- Level “O” umpire payments should be 50% or less than the payment for a Level 1 umpire (Level “O” umpires do not typically incur travel costs, purchase uniforms or equipment)
- Junior clubs or association pay for the Level 1 seminar costs for their umpires
- Where there is a local umpire association, any joining or membership fee for junior umpires is met by the club or association.
- Payments in “kind” are acceptable including drinks and food.

Once a payment system is commenced without our regard to the overall structure of baseball and its needs, a number of serious and difficult problems can potentially arise. Too much money at the wrong level and the higher levels of the game can not easily attract umpires and there is a disincentive created for advancement. Higher levels of the game then increase playing fees to payment umpires more and so the cycle continues. All leagues and associations must correctly compensate umpires for expenses and seek non monetary incentives to attract and retain umpires. See Appendix D below

It is strongly suggested that pay scales be agreed with the State Umpiring body and applied uniformly across leagues with minor variations for length and standard of game per ABF accreditation.

16. SUMMARY

Aim

To further develop the Umpire Development Program within Australia.

Objective

To improve umpire planning and performance and thereby contribute to an improvement in the quality of competition and organisation of Baseball.

Strategy

To increase the numbers, skill and standing of umpires through a methodical and consistent development program.

ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>1.1 Upgrade recruitment practices for Baseball umpires.</p> <p>* Develop leaflets, understandings and practices that encourage people to undertake Baseball umpiring.</p> <p>* Define and develop units of study for inclusion in Schools Certificate, Higher Schools Certificate levels and open Learning.</p> <p>* Introduce information and education sessions for Physical Education trainees - Pre and In-service.</p>	<p>* Production of Baseball umpire sport information leaflets.</p> <p>* Expansion of publicity and orientation sessions all states.</p> <p>* A draft curriculum</p> <p>* Year 2007 targets</p> <p>* Session outlines</p> <p>* A preliminary session</p>

17. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

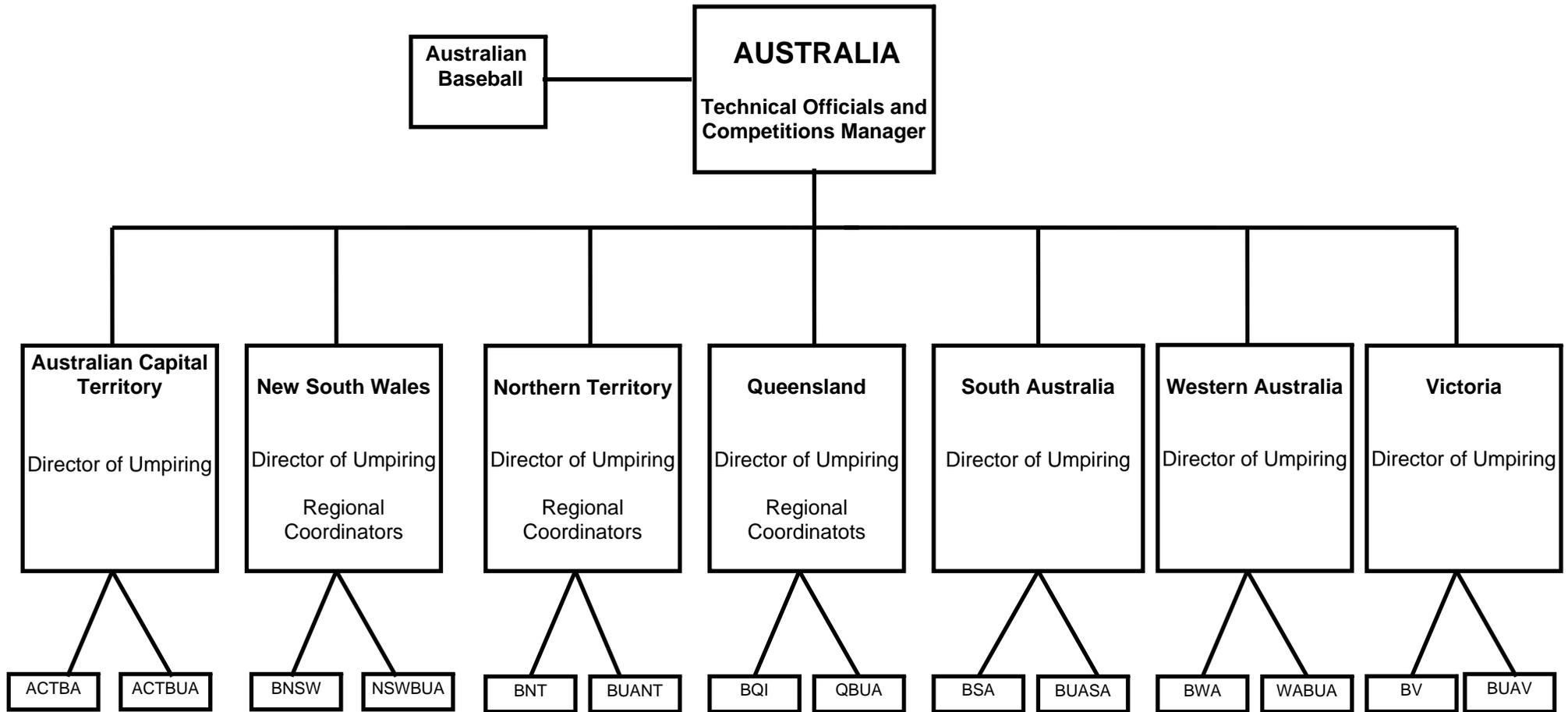
The preparation of this strategy has involved ongoing liaison with the following groups. Their assistance is greatly acknowledged:

- * Technical Officials and Competitions Manager.
- * State Directors of Umpiring.
- * Australian Sports Commission

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

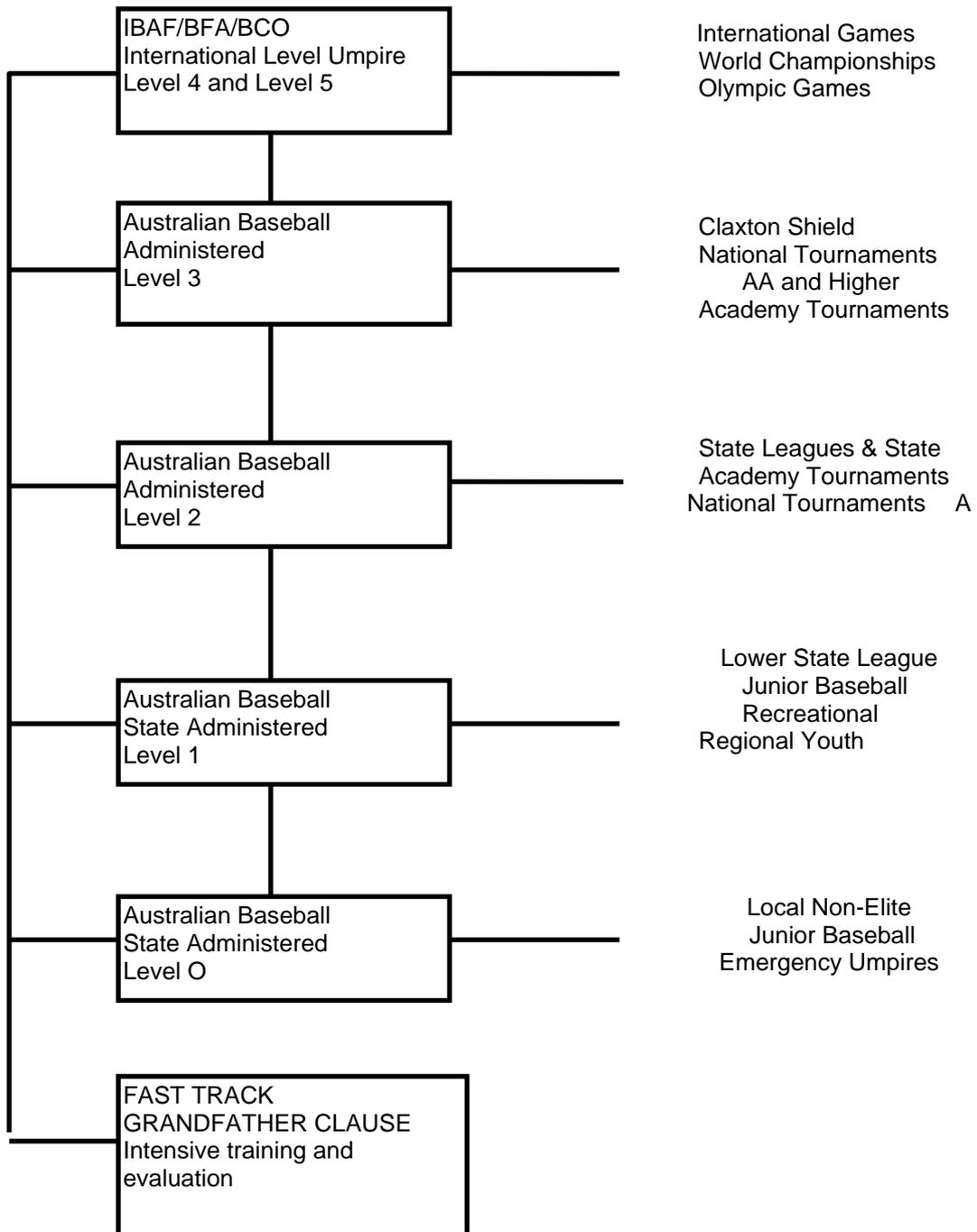
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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR UMPIRE DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA



ACCREDITATION STRUCTURE

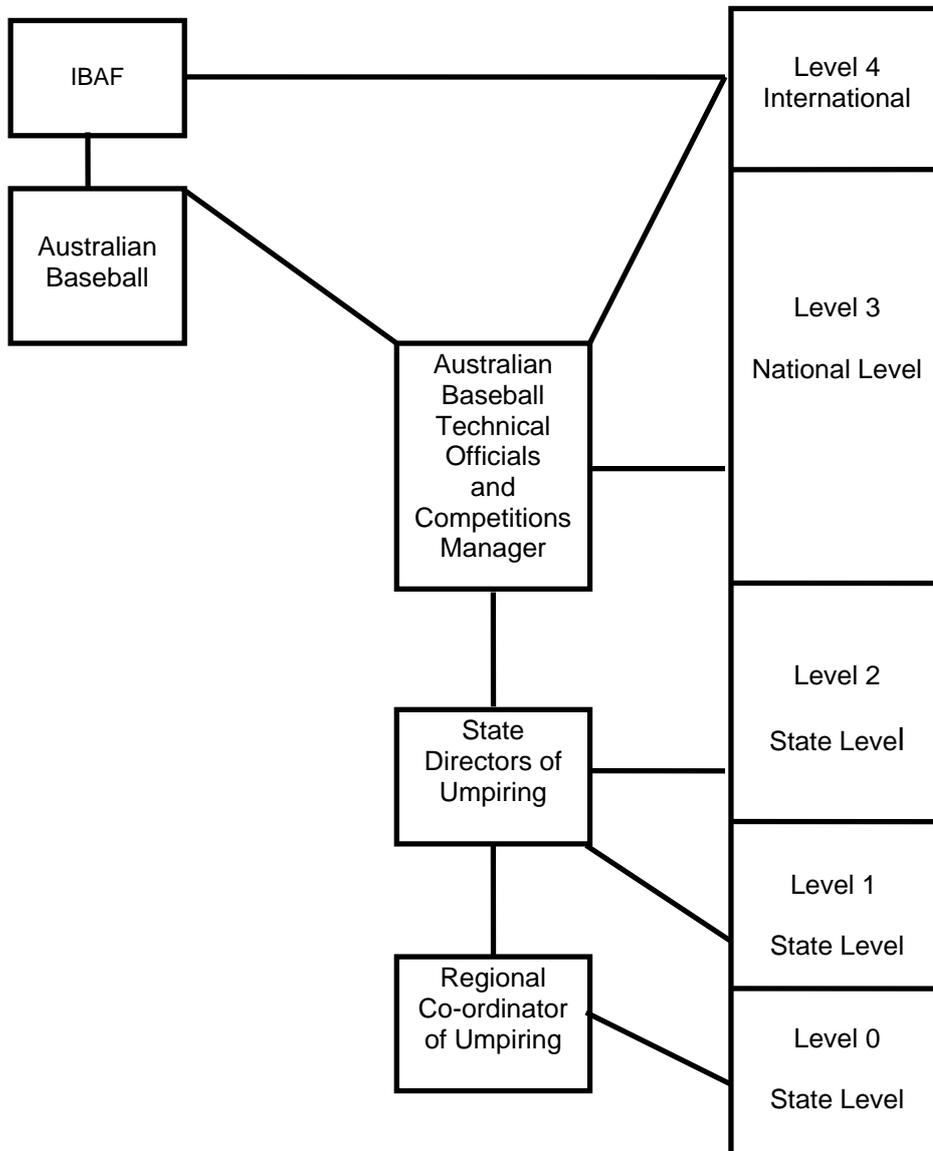
Applicable Appointments



ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS STRUCTURE

TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION

UMPIRE POOL



Incentives for Umpires under the Umpire Development Program

Level One

- Plate games in lower grade and junior games
- Base umpire in medium grades
- Junior and lower grade finals
- Maintain competency by attending Accredited State Seminars
- Attend National Umpire School
- Attain Level Two Accreditation

Level Two

- Plate games in medium grades
- Base umpire in high grades
- Maintain competency by attending Accredited State Seminars
- Medium level finals
- Attend National School
- Attend Professional Umpire School in USA
- A National Championships
- AA National Championships
- Attain Level Three Accreditation

Level Three

- Plate games high grades
- Instructor Panel
- Instruct at Seminars
- High level finals
- Instruct at National School
- AAA National Championships
- IBAF Junior Championships – AA, AAA
- BFA Junior Championships - AA, AAA
- BCO Championships – Southern Pacific Games, Olympic Qualifiers

Level Four

- IBAF Senior Championships – Intercontinental Cup, World Cup, Olympic Games
- BFA Senior Championships